

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen



Date: Wednesday, February 20, 2013
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room A, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chairman Pepe, Vice Chair Woodbury, Clerk Stevens, Members Berthiaume & Fritze, and Town Administrator Gaudette.

At 6:05 p.m. Chairman Pepe called the meeting to order.

Update: Vicious dog Bylaw Compliance – Robert Norris & Jamie Martel

Town Administrator Gaudette opened by informing the Board that he had been in touch with Buckley Insurance. The agent stated that he recently applied for the liability insurance but has not yet been approved by a carrier. Mr. Norris stated that there was confusion regarding the type of insurance which led to a delay in applying for the appropriate insurance. He thought all he needed was renters insurance when in fact the Town Bylaws require liability insurance.

Selectmen Woodbury stated that the Board is at a point where they can't keep extending Mr. Norris and Ms. Martel for failure to comply. The Board has already extended them several times over the last couple of months and in the interest of public safety, must bring this matter to a close.

A motion to impound the two dogs was made due to failure to comply with the Town's Vicious Dog Bylaw unless the dogs are surrendered at 9 a.m. tomorrow morning (Woodbury / Stevens) passed 5/0.

Administrator Gaudette explained to Mr. Norris that once the liability insurance was obtained and all the other bylaw requirements were met, then the dogs would be released back to him. Mr. Norris stated that he would remove the dogs from town and that he would not be surrendering him. The Board explained that would be his choice but that the Town would take necessary action if the dogs were not surrendered.

Joint Meeting with East Brookfield Selectmen

Agreement Amendment:

Leo Fayard and Joe Fish, Selectmen from East Brookfield were present to discuss ongoing issues with SEBRSD. Chair Pepe opened that an invitation was made to East Brookfield Selectmen for the purposes of discussing the Regional District Agreement. Administrator Gaudette added that the Spencer Selectmen want to entertain the idea of adding a Selectman from each Town to the SEBRSD Committee; by adding two spots, not replacing two spots, for a total membership of 9 people.

Selectman Fayard stated that he agreed with the concept however he was concerned about the difficulty of the workload of being both a Selectmen and a School Committee member. He like the idea of being a full voting member of the Committee but hopes there would not be an expectation to be on several School Committee sub-committees as well.

Selectmen Berthiaume and Administrator Gaudette discussed the procedure for amending the Agreement which is either by a petition of the majority of the School Committee or 10% of the registered voters from either Town. The Board members discussed the idea of sending a letter to the SEBRSD Committee as a first alternative rather than petitioning the voters.

Selectmen Woodbury stated that the Committee should be aware that the Selectmen are not trying to take over the Committee but the lines of communication are just not open enough under the current structure. Selectmen Fayard asked how the Board member felt about allowing for a Selectmen's designee. All agreed that it should be a Selectman who is an elected official.

A motion to have the Town Administrator send a letter requesting the SEBRSD to take a vote to petition the Towns to amend the Agreement to add a BoS member to the Committee (Woodbury / Berthiaume) passed 5/0. Note that East Brookfield Selectmen passed the same vote (Fish/Fayard) 2/0.

Chair Pepe asked the East Brookfield Selectmen if their Town would ever consider allowing regionalization at the East Brookfield Elementary School. Selectman Fayard stated that when considering to build the school, they had a non-binding referendum question on this issue and the voters answered "no" because they wanted to keep the elementary school-aged children within the Town and not bus some of them to a school in Spencer.

Budget Issues:

Selectman Stevens opened by stating that he is concerned that the SEBRSD Committee typically only meets once a month and he wonders if some of this could have been avoided. Selectman Fayard agreed and wondered how well the members can be informed when only meeting once a month.

Administrator Gaudette, when discussing his concerns with the FY2014 SEBRSD Budget, mentioned that the District is required to submit a budget by March 18th which is less than 30 days away and also the Selectmen only have until April 9th to post a ballot question for an override which is only about 45 days away. He expressed the need to start moving forward as the Town's budget and Warrant process is on hold until the Towns get some answers from the District regarding their FY2014 Budget.

Thus, he asked the Boards to endorse a budget number for SEBRSD so that both sides would know how to handle their budgets and what would be needed for an override. He suggested endorsing a budget that is based on the minimum local contribution level for FY2014 and any request above that would be the override amount. The purpose is not to only fund the District at minimum levels, but to establish a baseline as to what the override amount would be.

A motion to endorse a budget meeting minimum local contribution levels for FY2014 (Berthiaume / Fritze) passed 5/0. Note that East Brookfield Selectmen stated they would take a similar vote at their next meeting when the full Board was present. After that vote was taken, Town Administrator Gaudette would send a letter to the SEBRSD on the behalf of both Boards of Selectmen.

Selectmen Stevens asked if Administrator Gaudette could provide the Board with the latest budget reports in upcoming Board packets.

Also, Chair Pepe asked the Administrator to invite the Planning Board to an upcoming workshop to discuss the Medical Marijuana zoning and also add zoning that is related to economic development.

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Gaudette
Town Administrator